

"Joshua Lederberg— A Life in Science"

by

Dr. Alexa T. McCray
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2:00–3:15 P.M.

Lister Hill Center Auditorium
National Library of Medicine



A lecture in celebration
of the opening of the
Joshua Lederberg Papers
and the completion of the
Lederberg Profiles in Science®
Web exhibit

<http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/BB/>

Abstract

As an elementary student, Joshua Lederberg already had scientific aspirations. While other children may have looked to sports or entertainment figures as their idols, Lederberg's idol was Albert Einstein. His most treasured gift at his coming of age ceremony (Bar Mitzvah) was a chemistry textbook, and as a young teenager, he read, for him a pivotal book, Paul de Kruif's *Microbe Hunters*. Joshua Lederberg not only conducted Nobel Prize winning research (for his work on bacterial genetics), but he also took seriously his responsibility as an educated citizen. For many years he wrote a column in *The Washington Post* that took on the scientific issues of the day and made them accessible to the public, and today he continues to be an ardent proponent of open access to scientific information. His insatiable appetite for scientific knowledge has taken him on by-roads to artificial intelligence, exobiology, and, more recently, biotechnology. The National Library of Medicine's Profiles in Science Web site makes the papers of this prolific and public-minded scientist available for all to use. This talk will explore some of those materials, illustrating Joshua Lederberg's legacy to science and humanity.

Dr. McCray is Lecturer on Medicine, Harvard Medical School, former Director of the Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications and former Project Director of Profiles in Science.

A computer will be available in the Visitors Center for browsing the Joshua Lederberg online exhibit.